

DRAFT

VLR 12/4/02

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting **determinations for individual** properties and districts. See **instructions** in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property historic name Chaster Plantationother names/site number Prince George Country Club VDHR # 74-592. Location street 8 number 8401 Golf Course Drivenot for publication N/Acity or town Disputantavicinity N/Astate Virginiacode VAcounty Prince Georgecode 149zip code 23842

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility ~~meets~~ the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register☐ removed from the National
Register☐ other (explain) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
7	4	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
8	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
listed
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously
in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structures

Current Functions

DOMESTIC: Inn

COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance Applicable National Register Criteria

Areas of Significance

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

ARCHITECTURE

- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Period of Significance

1845 to 1950

- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Significant Dates

1845, 1949

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Remmie L. Arnold

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record# _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository :

Chester Plantation (74-59)
Name of Property

Prince George County, Virginia
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 33.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u>	<u>0299670</u>	<u>4112450</u>	3	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	4	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>

☒ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Kimberly M. Chen</u>	
organization	<u>Kimberly M. Chen & Associates, Inc.</u>	date <u>20 September 2002</u>
street & number	<u>2701 East Broad Street</u>	telephone <u>804.225.9560</u>
city or town	<u>Richmond</u>	state <u>VA</u> zip code <u>23223</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>Phillip R. and Florence Scruggs</u>		
street & number	<u>P O Box 100</u>	telephone	<u>804.991.2462</u>
city or town	<u>Disputanta</u>	state	<u>VA</u> zip code <u>23842</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 200137127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (10240018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
Prince George County, VA

Summary Description:

Chester Plantation, built ca. 1845 by Williamson Simmons (1808-1885) on his 738-acre estate, is an excellent example of a Greek Revival dwelling that has evolved over many decades. The plantation is situated on the brow of a low hill on the south side of State Route 630 (Baxter Road) near the town of Disputanta. The original building was a two-story, single-pile, center-hall-plan, frame dwelling. A two-story full-width porch, with full-height Doric columns, dresses the front facade. In 1854, a two-story frame wing was added to the rear of the house creating an L-shaped plan. In 1949, two 1-1/2-story wings were added to the east and west ends of the dwelling. In the 1980s the rear porches were enclosed and one-story additions constructed on the south side of the building. An open lawn slopes down to Baxter Road and the Norfolk and Western Railroad Co. tracks on the north, and to a lake on the west. The property consists of the historic dwelling, six contributing and one noncontributing outbuilding, and a contributing structure. Among the contributing outbuildings and structures are a swimming pool and pool house, dating from the 1940s, situated at the edge of the lake. Extant outbuildings are found on a flat lawn south of the house. The contributing outbuildings include an icehouse and well house built in the 1840s, a secondary dwelling built in the 1920s, and an open cart shed and concession building both constructed in the 1940s. A recently constructed, ca. 2001, equipment building near the pool house does not contribute to the architectural or historic significance of the property.

Detailed Description:

Site

Chester Plantation is sited on a gently sloping hill overlooking a lake and surrounded by an open lawn with scattered shade trees. A swimming pool and pool house, on the west side of the house, are situated near the edge of the lake. A circular pool and fountain are located between the dwelling and the pool house. Several outbuildings break up the open lawn south of the dwelling. A short access road, from Baxter Road on the north, approaches the house on the east side, separating the house and its grounds from the adjacent golf course. There is a parking area on the north side of the property. A hedge and circular drive shield the dwelling from the parking area. Across the drive, there is a shallow flight of brick steps with flanking brick piers. The steps lead to a concrete walk that is centered on the dwelling entrance. The walk terminates at four brick-cheeked steps that rise to the porch.

Exterior

The symmetrical, Greek Revival dwelling was built in three major phases. The earliest portion of the house, ca. 1845, is the two-story, three-bay, center-hall; single-pile-plan central block set on a common bond foundation with a shallow hipped roof. A two-story, gable-roofed wing was added to the south side of the house, ca. 1854, creating an L-shaped plan. In 1949, two four-bay 1-1/2-story

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Prince George County, VA

gable-roofed wings with three gable-roofed dormers were added to the east and west ends of the building. A full-width porch with two-story fluted Doric columns accentuates the central block of the dwelling. The porch cornice has widely spaced carved brackets and a plain frieze. The brackets and plain frieze continue along the side of the dwelling below the hipped roof. Doric pilasters demarcate the edges of the dwelling. The centered four-panel entry door is deeply carved with recessed panels. The corners of the panels have a concave radius with carved bullets where the squared-off corners would be. Four-light sidelights and a ruby glass transom with a grapevine pattern flank the door. Three-part, floor-to-ceiling windows are symmetrically placed on either side of the door. The center portion of the windows has a six-over-nine light configuration and the smaller flanking sections are of a two-over-three configuration. The door and window architraves are unadorned and terminate in a shallow pediment. The second floor is five bays wide with symmetrically placed six-over-six windows. A common bond interior end chimney with a corbeled cap is still visible above the roof on the east end of the main block. The western chimney has been removed above the roof. Four-bay, 1 1/2-story wings were added to the east and west ends of the center block in the mid-twentieth century. Six-over-six windows are symmetrically placed in the wall with corresponding vents in the brick foundation. Three gable-roofed dormers, with six-over-six windows, pierce the gable roofs of the wings. The gable-ended east elevation has a centered, one-story three-sided projecting bay with a bell-cast roof. There is a six-over-six window and a French door in each of the narrow faces of the bay and an eight-over-eight window in the wider face. The door in the north façade of the projecting bay opens onto a deck with stairs. The rear or south elevation is composed of a series of additions and porch enclosures. The oldest section on this elevation is the two-story gable-roofed ell built ca. 1854. There is a common bond interior end chimney with a corbeled cap centered in the gable end. One-story shed-roofed porches that have been enclosed flank the two-story section. A shed-roofed porch on the south side of the east wing has been enclosed and a one-story shed-roofed addition built adjacent to this enclosed porch. A shed-roofed dormer has also been added to the rear of the east wing. On the west side, a one-story hip-roofed addition wraps around the enclosed shed-roofed porch and partially around the end of the two-story block. An exterior side, common bond chimney with a corbelled cap is centered on the south elevation of the west wing. The chimney stack extends above the gable roof. A five-sided projecting porch dominates the gable end of the west elevation. The basement or lower level of the porch is a covered patio that is partially enclosed by low retaining walls. Brick piers support the upper level of the porch that has turned posts, a balustrade of square pickets and a five-faceted roof. An open porch with a similar balustrade extends across the rear of the west wing and forms a ramp along the side of the two-story ell.

Interior

The interior of Chester Plantation was well documented in 1937 as part of a Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory. The inventory is valuable in understanding changes made since 1937. The twisted stair is located in the northeast corner where it curves above the front

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
Prince George County, VA

door. The curvilinear sawn newel does not extend above the molded handrail and compliments the square picket balustrade. The plaster walls of the entry hall feature a molded base, plaster dado, chair board and molded surbase in the lower section. A dentiled cornice has been added at the ceiling. The molded base, plaster dado, chair board, molded surbase, and crown molding also, are found in the two parlors flanking the entry hall. The six panel doors are raised on one face and flat on the other with box locks and brass hinges. The door and window architraves are molded. The windows have interior louvered shutters that are pocketed into the wall. The mantel in the west parlor has a molded cornice, plain frieze, and crossetted pilasters. The shelf of the eastern mantel is supported by paired, carved brackets. The frieze and pilasters have flat panels. The room to the rear of the entry hall has been significantly altered since 1937. The walls have been covered with vertical bead board paneling, crown and base moldings added and the fenestration changed. The Colonial Revival mantel has a mirrored over mantel. The western wing is a single room with raised paneling on the walls and an exposed beam ceiling. The wide mantel has a molded shelf and plain pilasters. The eastern wing is divided into a dining room, a bedroom, and bathrooms. The crown molding used in the earlier rooms continues in this part of the house. Wainscoting was not used in the eastern wing.

The central hall stair ascends to the second story in a gentle curve. The balustrade intersects a square post with decorative base at the second story. A slightly higher square picket balustrade encloses the open stairwell. Door and window architraves and crown molding, identical to those seen on the first story, are used in the hall and three bedrooms. The mantels on the second floor are the same in each room – freestanding colonnettes support a plain frieze and molded cornice. Below the projecting cornice, at the wall face is a second paneled frieze.

The cellar under the earliest part of the house has been sealed off and is no longer accessible. However, the area under the west wing is a large open room that serves as a dining room and commercial kitchen. The walls are decorated with a molded base, chair rail and cornice. At the eastern end of the basement is a large brick fireplace with two fireboxes, one square and one arched. A molded shelf breaks the massing as the stack steps back from the face of the box. A second large fireplace is centered in the southern wall. The second fireplace is constructed of randomly laid fieldstone with a molded shelf supported by molded consoles.

Inventory

Single Dwelling, ca. 1845, Greek Revival, two-story, three-bay, center-hall-plan frame dwelling with a full-width, two-story porch with Doric columns, hip-roofed, with four bay, gable-roofed wings on both ends, **Contributing**

Ice House, ca. 1845, one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed, American bond brick building, **Contributing**

Well House, ca. 1845, one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed American bond brick building with a shed

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
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addition, **Contributing**

Single Dwelling, ca. 1920, Craftsman, one-story, three-bay, frame, hip-roofed dwelling, with a one-bay shed-roofed porch and two interior chimneys, **Contributing**

Cart Shed, ca. 1940, one-story, multiple bays, open post construction with a gable roof, **Contributing**

Concession Building, ca. 1940, is a one-story, three-bay, concrete block and frame building with flat roof with deep overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, **Contributing**

Pool House, ca. 1940, two-story, three bay, frame building with a deep shed-roofed porch on four sides set on a raised block foundation, **Contributing**

Swimming Pool, ca. 1940, concrete and tile, **Contributing**

Equipment Shed, ca. 2001, one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed concrete block storage building, **Noncontributing**

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
Prince George County, VA

Statement of Significance

Chester Plantation, formerly known as "Chester" and "Arnolda Ranch", is located approximately ten miles southeast of Petersburg, Virginia in Prince George County. Fronting on the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company tracks and State Route 630 Chester Plantation retains 33 of its original acres. Col. Williamson Simmons (1808-1885) began developing the land in 1844. "Chester" grew with Col. Williamson's accumulation of land. In the 1860s, being near Petersburg, the property was privy to the stress and unrest of the Civil War. Remaining in the Simmons family until the turn of the twentieth century, the land was slowly divided, changing hands several times before Rennie L. Arnold (1894-1971) bought the property. Arnold began amassing acreage once again. "Chester" Plantation stands as a testament to the evolutionary process typical throughout Prince George County and Virginia over the last two centuries. Developing into the Arnolda Ranch Country Club, the property is now part of the Prince George Country Club Estates and Golf Course. Chester Plantation is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria B and C.

Historic Background

Williamson Simmons, the builder of "Chester", was born 13 October 1808, the son of Sarah Baird and Coleman Simmons. Land tax and deed records show that Sarah Baird Simmons had built tenements on the property known as "Chester" farm during the 1830s. In 1843, Sarah Simmons transferred 299 acres to her son. It was on this parcel that Williamson built the house between 1845 and 1848. This is born out in the land tax records that show improvements on the property valued at \$598.00 in 1845 (the early tenements) had increased to \$1,628.00 by 1848.¹ Coincidentally, on 10 March 1845, Williamson Simmons married Mary Virginia Smith, the daughter of Lodowick and Mary Kennon Hughs Smith. An increase in tax dollars between 1851 and 1855 is indicative of the early expansion of the house. The addition is likely related to the birth of Williamson and Mary's children, for it was in this house that they reared four boys and four girls. By 1862, through a series of acquisitions, Simmons had amassed 848 acres on Second Swamp ("Chester" farm), ten miles southeast of the Petersburg Courthouse, with a building value of \$1,752.00. Simmons owned a second 365.5-acre farm eight miles southeast of the Petersburg.

During the Civil War, Simmons attained the honor of Colonel, while a member of the Prince George Cavalry. Oral tradition indicates that, "Chester" was the scene of much action during the Civil War. Though troops from both sides are said to have stolen food from the house, very little of the property was destroyed because of the hospitality shown by the Simmons family to both armies even though Williamson Simmons served in the Prince George Cavalry. On two other occasions meals were supposedly prepared for Confederate soldiers, but before they could be eaten Union troops arrived. The Confederates were hidden in a secret cellar under the kitchen while the Union troops ate the

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
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meals.² A tunnel then lead from the secret cellar to a ravine and creek where the lake is now sited.³ Allegedly a skirmish, in which several Confederate Scouts were taken prisoner, one being killed and buried there, occurred in front of the house in April of 1865. In May, purportedly a portion of Grant's army camped in the field north of the house and for three days the officers stayed in the house with the Simmons family.⁴ The area in and around Petersburg was the scene of many battles and skirmishes during the Civil War. There is extensive documentation of troop movement along Jerusalem Plank Road and at Lee's Mill, just west of the property. In July of 1864, the 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry picketed at Old Shop Church brought the armies within a couple of miles of "Chester."⁵

Division of the property began as early as the 1850s when the Norfolk and Petersburg Railway Company, now Norfolk and Western Railroad Company, initiated plans for a single-track line through the southeastern part of Virginia. Preliminary surveys conducted in 1851 and 1852 by "General 'Billy' Mahone supported the feasibility of a railway. By his will, proved in court on 9 December 1886, Williamson Simmons left his estate to two of his sons, George and Bruce. The property remained in the Simmons family until 1918. The property changed hands several times before coming into Rennie Arnold's possession in 1945. Mrs. Arnold claimed her enthusiasm for the "Chester" property was partly due to its connection to Mahone, of Readjuster and Norfolk and Western Railway fame.⁶ According to Mrs. Dorothy Arnold Waite, the daughter of Rennie and Charlia Arnold, "Mahone stayed at the house periodically while supervising the construction of the railroad." Arnold amassed more than 900 acres of farmland, pastures and woodland, which soon became known as Arnolda Ranch. The Arnolds renovated the dwelling and in 1949 added the wings to the original structure. They furnished the house with many handsome antiques acquired through their overseas travels. The grounds were beautifully landscaped with many improvements, including a lake to the west of the house and a large swimming pool.⁷ Rennie conducted extensive farming operations, becoming a member of the Virginia 100-Bushel Corn Club in 1949, and raised Black Angus cattle while his wife, Charlia, raised Palomino horses.⁸ Rennie Arnold died of heart failure in 1971, but not before leaving a legacy as a leading humanitarian, philanthropist, businessman and civic leader in Petersburg and the state of Virginia.

Rennie LeRoy Arnold born 25 January 1894 in Petersburg, Virginia was the second of four children of Andrew Alexander Arnold and Mary Virginia Arnold. His father was an unskilled laborer, and provided his family with the barest of necessities. To supplement the family income, Rennie took his first job at age nine delivering newspapers for the *Petersburg Progress-Index*. In 1907, he quit school and took a full time job in a planing mill. Over the next two years, Arnold held a succession of jobs as a laborer in various factories in the Petersburg area. Having higher aspirations for himself, Arnold took a job as a freight clerk with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. Arnold proved to have a head for figures and was soon promoted to an assistant in the local agent's office where he prepared extensive reports on the freight being shipped. After five years he transferred to the Norfolk and Western Railroad and in 1915 he secured a position as General Manager at the Edison Pen

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
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Company.⁹ When Arnold joined Edison they occupied the third floor of the Leigh Building, in Petersburg, had one employee and were engaged in repairing pens and selling bottles of ink. Under Rennie Arnold's leadership the company began to assemble fountain pens using parts from other companies and soon they were manufacturing their own pens.

In 1935, Arnold came to the conclusion that if he could do it for others, he could do it even better for himself.¹⁰ It was with this conviction that he established the R. L. Arnold Pen Company, Inc. on August 15, 1935. Arnold purchased the old Red Fox Pants Company's building on East Washington Street in Petersburg, equipped it with state-of-the-art machinery, and had a staff of 75 persons. As president and sole owner of his company Arnold achieved great success from the start. Within twelve months he doubled the size of the factory and in less than five years had approximately 200 employees. "The company had extended its line to include not only fountain pens and pencils, but also flashlights and keychain permit holders and other novelties as well. A printing department had been set up which printed anything a customer wanted on pens, pencils and other products."¹¹ By the 1940s the R. L. Arnold Pen Company was the second largest pen manufacturer in the world with its products being sold throughout the United States and in many foreign countries.¹² The company continued to grow and prosper and in 1971, Rennie LeRoy Arnold, Jr. succeeded his father as president. Arnold Pen Company remained a family owned and operated business until 1992 when it was sold. Still in operation the company manufactures printed pens for promotional purposes. As the business grew, so did the responsibilities of Arnold as a civic leader and fraternal organization member.

Rennie Arnold served on the Petersburg City Council from 1936 to 1944 where he advocated for better housing and recreational facilities for the city's black and white citizens. He also pointed out the pollution of the Appomattox River and organized and led the committee tasked with building a Petersburg airport. Arnold, being progressively minded, felt that a city in the 1930s without an airport was like one without a railroad station – left behind. Most people, including the City Manager felt that an airport was unnecessary, primarily because so few people had ever been on an airplane. Arnold initiated contact with the Civil Aeronautic Authority in Washington, DC and secured funding for the project. The airport was built in 1940 using \$1.5 million of federal funding and only \$35,000 to \$40,000 of Petersburg's money to purchase the land.¹³ In May 1940, Arnold wrote to President Roosevelt initiating the rehabilitation and reuse of Camp Lee now known as Fort Lee. Camp Lee had been established near Petersburg at the beginning of World War I and had been used for the training of the 80th and 37th Divisions. When the war was over, the camp was closed, dismantled and abandoned. Rennie felt that the 7,000 acres could be used for purposes of the national defense program in light of Germany and Russia's recent invasion of Poland. Arnold's letter writing campaign did not end with the President; he dispatched letters to area Senators and Congressmen, as well as regional civic and business leaders. By November, the Army had committed itself to the rehabilitation of the camp.¹⁴ In 1941, Camp Lee became the Quartermaster Replacement Training Center, a function it still serves today. Fort Lee is also a major employer in the Petersburg area.

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Being too old for active service during World War II prompted Arnold, in 1943, to organize the Petersburg #1 Chapter of the American War Dads. The American War Dads, established in 1942, was an organization "to help servicemen keep in touch with their parents and to press the government for better medical treatment in the military and to prepare for postwar medical care, insurance, job training and education for veterans."¹⁵ He was elected National President in 1943 and reelected in 1944.¹⁶ In his capacity as National President, Arnold traveled extensively in England, France and the United States and personally delivered thousands of letters from servicemen to their families. Arnold participated in several other fraternal and civic organizations throughout the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Some of these included; National President of the Circus Saints and Sinners in 1938-39; District Deputy Exalted Ruler of the Elks in Virginia in 1944; and National Imperial Potentate of the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in 1953-54.¹⁷

In 1949 he campaigned for the Democratic Party nomination for Governor of Virginia. Arnold's platform was an unusual mixture of both progressive and conservative ideas. He advocated for better schools and adequate salaries and pensions for teachers. He opposed the poll tax, sought racial understanding and an improved welfare system. He was critical of labor unions and government intervention in business. He wanted improved game and forest conservation programs, supported highway beautification and the expansion of agricultural areas. Arnold had no chance against the other candidates and their political machines and placed fourth only garnering seven percent of the vote. Though Arnold was not elected, the campaign illustrated his continued interest in, and commitment to, his state and country.¹⁸

During the 1950s and 1960s Arnold withdrew from partisan organizations and focused his attentions on his business, fraternal activities and Arnolda Ranch. In 1961, Rennie and his wife, Charlia, sold 711 acres of the Chester property to Blain B. and Louise F. Baugus. In 1963, Baugus opened an 18-hole golf course on the property, known as the Arnolda Ranch Country Club. Later, known as the Prince George County Golf Course. The house was converted to a restaurant and clubhouse. In 1981, the property was divided between the Prince George Golf Club and the Prince George Country Club Estates Development, who built houses along the west side of the lake. The current owners, Randy and Florence Scruggs purchased the house and 1.3 acres of land in 1999 and began the restoration of the house and the remaining outbuildings. Today, Chester Plantation, previously the residence of Col. Williamson Simmons and Rennie Arnold, is a restaurant and country inn.

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Auditor of Public Accounts. Prince George County Land Tax Books. Various dates between 1830 and 1891.

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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Chester Plantation (74-59)
Prince George County, VA

Geographical Data

UTM References, continued

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundaries are those identified by Prince George County property tax numbers 450 "06" 00-00A-1 and 450 "06" 00-00A-2.

Boundary Justification

While Chester was originally a plantation of over 700 acres, the parcel enclosed by the boundaries described above contains the original house and the extant dependencies. The surrounding property has been developed and no longer contributes to the historic character of the former plantation.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 11 **Page** 11

Chester Plantation (74-59)
Prince George County, VA

Photographic Index

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Property: Chester Plantation (074-0059)
Location: Prince George County, Virginia
Photographer: Kimberly M. Chen
Date: 15 May 2001
Negatives File: Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia
Negative Number: 19968

- 1 of 11: Facade looking South
- 2 of 11: Northeast corner looking Southwest
- 3 of 11: Rear looking North
- 4 of 11: Front Door
- 5 of 11: Ice House looking Southeast
- 6 of 11: Pool House looking Northwest
- 7 of 11: Cart Shed and Single Dwelling looking Southeast
- 8 of 11: Hall and Stair looking Northeast
- 9 of 11: First Story, East Dining Room looking East
- 10 of 11: First Story, door detail
- 11 of 11: First Story, Dining Room in West Wing looking Southeast

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

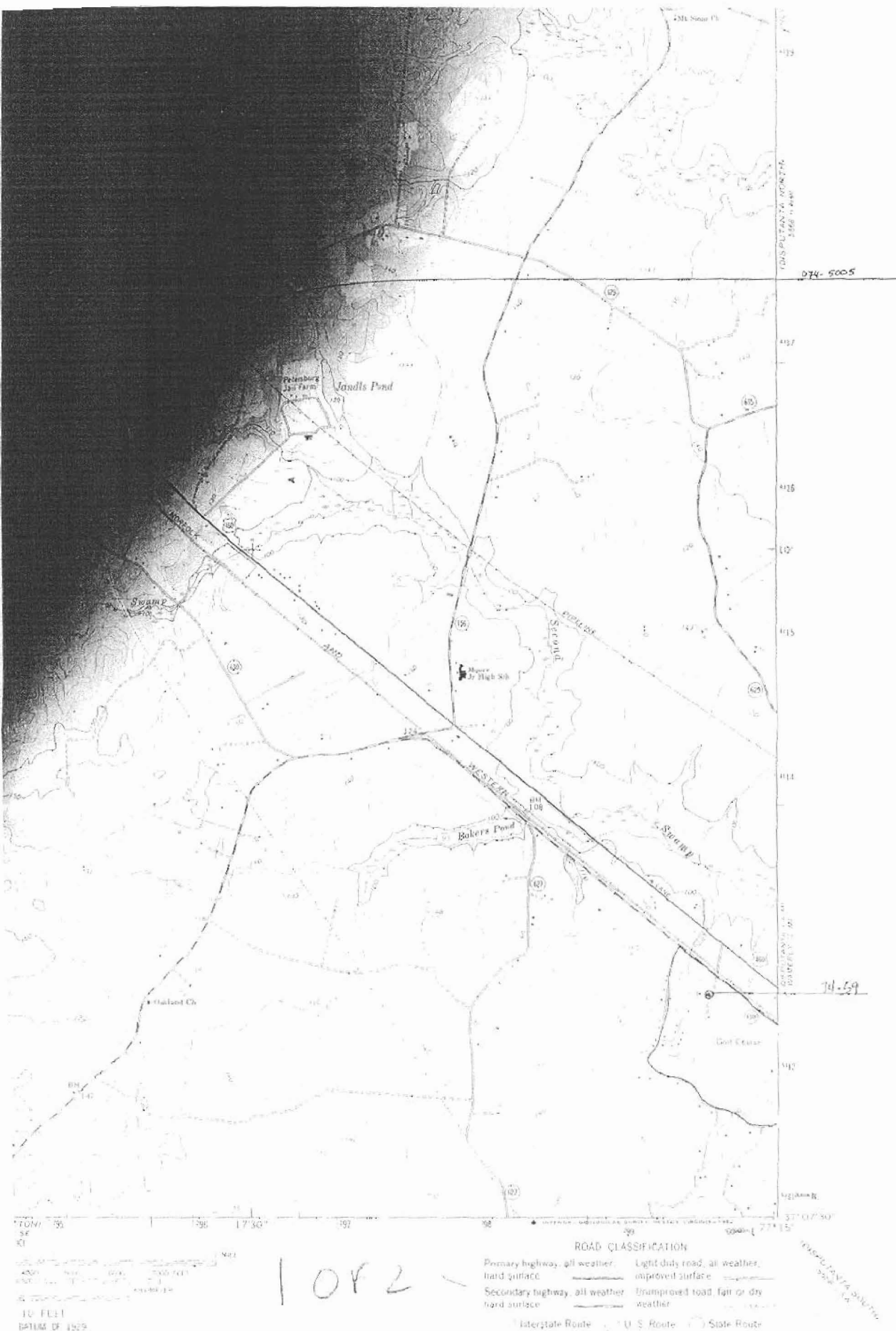
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 11 Page 12

Chester Plantation (74-59)
Prince George County, VA

End Notes

- ¹ Jennie S. Harrison, *Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory*, (Virginia: Conservation Commission, 1937), pages 1, 3, and Auditor of Public Accounts, Prince George County Land Tax Books, (Various dates between 1830 and 1891), and Prince George County Courthouse Deed Record 18/172, (1843).
- ² Jennie S. Harrison, *Works Progress Administration...*, page 3.
- ³ Interview with Mrs. Dorothy Arnold Waite
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Robert N. Scott, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Vol. XL, Part 1, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), page 208.
- ⁶ William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings: The Life Story of Rennie LeRoy Arnold*, (Virginia: McClure Printing Company, 1953), page 512.
- ⁷ Ibid, pages 281, 512, 514.
- ⁸ William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 278, 287.
- ⁹ Ibid, pages 77, 568, and John T. Kneebone, et. al., eds., *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, Vol. 1, (Virginia: Library of Virginia, 1998), page 216.
- ¹⁰ William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 83.
- ¹¹ Ibid, pages 84.
- ¹² Ibid, pages 83, 90.
- ¹³ Ibid, 67, 233.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 220, 221, 222.
- ¹⁵ Kneebone, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography...*, page 216.
- ¹⁶ William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 111, 112, and John T. Kneebone, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography...*, page 216
- ¹⁷ William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 568, 569, 570, and John T. Kneebone, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography...*, page 216.
- ¹⁸ William Moseley Brown, *From These Beginnings...*, pages 155, 192, 203.



IP ACCURACY STANDARDS
Y. RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
S. CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1979 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1981.

PRINCE GEORGE, VA.

1980-5-27/75-76

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